

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

SUBJECT BRIEF

Community engagement is a collaborative process that brings together residents, businesses, and stakeholders to shape the vision and conditions of their community.

WHY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

Community engagement supports informed decision making by enabling two-way communication between the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the public. It provides opportunities for individuals, organizations, and stakeholders to share information, identify alternative approaches, and contribute feedback throughout the project life cycle. Engagement helps ensure that transportation plans, programs, and project activities are clear, technically accurate, and responsive to real world conditions.

FDOT's Role in Community Engagement

FDOT integrates community engagement into statewide planning, project development and environmental, design, construction, and maintenance activities. FDOT continues to:

- communicate project information in a clear and timely manner;
- notify affected and interested parties according to federal and state requirements;
- provide multiple avenues for participation, including in person and virtual events;
- document input and carry information forward into subsequent phases; and
- coordinate with local governments, partner agencies, and technical experts to ensure consistent public information.

STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



1 Identify Stakeholders

Use data, field visits, and community input to map out residents, businesses, local leaders, property owners, travelling public, and unique groups.



2 Build Relationships

Foster trust through consistent presence and transparent communication, including timely notice of meetings or hearings and adhering to all legal requirements to hold those meetings.



3 Tailor Engagement

Adapt methods to local context, including pop-ups, small group meetings, surveys, digital outreach, and virtual meetings.



4 Apply Emerging Technology Practices

Utilize social media, geofencing, and virtual walkthrough to broaden reach and enhance understanding.



5 Ensure User-friendliness

Provide ADA-compliant venues, translation services, and multiple participation options.



6 Improve Continuously

Set goals, track indicators, conduct staff debriefs, and update engagement strategies.

Understanding Your Community

Effective community engagement requires awareness of local conditions, schedules, and decision making patterns. In rural and small town environments, participation may be influenced by seasonal events, venue availability, and travel distances. In urban areas, engagement efforts must account for higher population density, varied stakeholder groups, and congested travel corridors, which can influence meeting availability, timing, and preferred communication channels. It can also be helpful to keep in mind that people's communication habits and daily routines differ, which may shape how and when they are able to participate.

Every community is unique. Schedule engagement activities with awareness of major community events and host them at accessible, familiar locations to encourage and maximize participation. Local organizations can help distribute information and support attendance. In geographically dispersed communities, trusted local partners may assist with announcing meetings, hosting engagement activities, or collecting feedback.

Community Engagement Occurs Through All Project Phases

Community engagement is continuous throughout FDOT's project development process—from planning through Project Development and Environment (PD&E), design, construction, and maintenance. Engagement begins broadly and becomes more project-specific as decisions are refined. Starting early helps teams understand community needs, anticipate concerns, and identify appropriate engagement opportunities.

Engagement also extends beyond individual projects. Ongoing relationships with local governments, stakeholders, and partner agencies build trust, strengthen coordination, and support more efficient project delivery.



KEY TAKEAWAY

Effective community engagement combines project-specific outreach with continuous relationship-building throughout the project lifecycle.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

[FDOT Community Engagement](#) | [Public Involvement Handbook](#)
[PD&E Manual - Part 1, Chapter 11](#) | [Public Engagement Resource Kit](#)
[FDOT Design Manual - Chapter 104](#) | [FDOT Americans with Disabilities Act Office](#)
[FDOT Project Management Resource Guide](#) | [FHWA Public Involvement](#)